

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24890

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TH, VN
SUBJ: VIEWS OF FORMER THAI FONMIN PHICHAI ON VIETNAMESE
PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND
GENUINE NEUTRALITY

1. PHICHAI RATTAKUN, FORMER FONMIN UNDER THE SENI
GOVERNMENT, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NATION ON AUGUST 28,
COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON THE FORTHCOMING VISIT OF
VIETNAMESE PM PHAM VAN DONG AND ON THE VIETNAMESE
PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE OF "PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND GENUINE
NEUTRALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA." PHICHAI SAID THAT THE
VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE OF PEACE WAS "NOT A NEW
ISSUE," THE VIETNAMESE HAVING RAISED THE ISSUE DURING
HIS VISIT TO HANOI IN AUGUST, 1976. HE CONTRASTED THE
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VIETNAMESE VERSION WITH THE ASEAN PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE
OF "PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY." PHICHAI CHARACTERIZED
THE VIETNAMESE VERSION AS AN ATTEMPT TO DESTROY UNITY
IN ASEAN AND AS EQUIVALENT TO HANOI'S "THROWING ITS
TRUMP CARD" SO AS TO CREATE SUSPICION AMONG THE ASEAN
MEMBER COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT HANOI WAS ATTEMPTING TO
DESTROY ASEAN SOLIDARITY WHICH OBSTRUCTS THE EXPANSION

OF SOVIET AND VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

2. COMMENTING ON VIETNAMESE PM PHAM VAN DONG'S IMPENDING VISIT TO THAILAND, PHICHAU BLAMED THE RTG FOR ALLEGEDLY ACCEPTING VIETNAM'S PROPOSAL TO SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT SINCE "THAT AGREEMENT IS NOT NECESSARY AND THAILAND, AT LEAST, HAD NEVER DECLARED WAR WITH VIETNAM." HE SUGGESTED THAT THAILAND IGNORE HANOI'S PROPOSAL TO SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT SO THAT SUCH AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BECOME A PRECONDITION FOR TALKS BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THAILAND AND VIETNAM. IN CLOSING, HE EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE SIGNED DURING PHAM VAN DONG'S VISIT.

3. COMMENT: IN HIS REMARKS ON THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, PHICHAU ECHOED MANY OF THE SENTIMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED TO EMBOFFS BY VARIOUS MFA OFFICIALS. MFA OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, PRIVATELY HAVE TAKEN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE VIETNAMESE PROPOSAL ONE STEP FURTHER BY QUESTIONING ITS ACTUAL CONTENT. IN PARTICULAR, RTG OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN BOTHERED BY HANOI'S PREVIOUS USE OF THE PHRASE "GENUINE INDEPENDENCE" AND THE PRESENT USE OF THE PHRASE "GENUINE NEUTRALITY," AS WELL AS BY HANOI'S CONSPICUOUS OMISSION OF THE TERM "FREEDOM." SUSPICION OF VIETNAMESE MOTIVES IN PROPOSING THEIR OWN FORMULA FOR A ZONE OF PEACE APPEARS TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ALMOST UNIVERSAL WITHIN THE RTG. PHICHAU'S COMMENTS ON THIS ASPECT OF THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS ARE WELL WITHIN THE MAINSTREAM OF CURRENT THOUGHT IN THAILAND.
ABRAMOWITZ

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